

Handwriting

Strategies for Improving Classroom Performance

Marysville Exempted Village School District

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Possible Indicators of Handwriting Problems

*“death grip” on pencil

*movements from the shoulder, not the hand

*awkward position of the body- slouching, resting head on hand or arm

*signs of fatigue- poor posture, shaking of hand, squeezing hand, switching dominance

*avoidance

*sparse written output compared to reading and verbal abilities

*eyes shake or seem to take too long to focus

*too much erasing

*frequent referral to an alphabet chart

*confusions with directional orientation, mirror writing, or reversals

*poor use of space- writing too spread out or too cramped

*incorrect letter formation

*omissions of letters or words

*line skipping

*slow motor speed

*difficulty generating letters when not copying

*difficulty keeping up with dictation

The Physical Abilities Involved in Handwriting

The Eyes

- *20/20 vision
- *"teaming"
- *fixation
- *tracking
- *saccades
- *time it takes to refocus after movement
- *muscles: strong and balanced

The Trunk

- *strong belly and back muscles
- *able to sit for in chair with good posture

The Shoulders and Neck

- *strength and endurance in the shoulders
- *fixation when writing

The Hands

- *able to isolate the fingers
- *grasping patterns developed: pincer and tripod
- *in-hand manipulation skills - penny in palm - move to finger tips
- *the wrist: strong and stable
 - turn pencil over to eraser w/o laying down.
 - walk fingers ↑ ↓

The Skill Loop

Visual Perception Skills: that which occurs between the eyes and the brain

- *figure ground
- *spatial relationships
- *directionality
- *visual memory
- *visual sequential memory
- *size
- *shape

Visual Motor Skills: that which happens between the brain and the hand

- *eye-hand coordination... do they move together smoothly as a team
- *when the brain gives an "order," does the hand respond correctly

Hand Skills: the neuro-motor response of the muscles and joints of the hand

- *grasp pattern
- *grip strength
- *ability to perceive and regulate force
- *endurance
- *coordinated movements of the wrist and fingers
- *does each "side" of the hand know its job

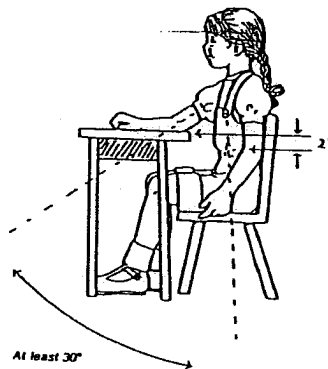
drop wrist - lift hand - thumb + 1st/2nd fingers
work/come together - skill ; last 2 fingers - stabile

Now That We Know What Can Cause Handwriting Problems,

What Can We Do About Them?

A Multi-Sensory Approach to Handwriting: From Foundation Skills to Specifics

First Things First: Let's Look At Posture!



What Can We Do About Those Eyes?

Refer: School Nurse, Developmental Optometrist

Activities to Make a Strong Trunk -

good for slouchy "mashy" kids

Superman!
pose

1 on belly
+ head arms
toes as if
ying - 30 secs.

An Upside Down Bike Ride

The Amazing Scooterboard
On your belly for your back!
On your seat for your belly!

Rock and Roll
on all 4 and
go forward &
backward

The Dead Cockroach - lay on
back -
raise
arms
head +
legs

Strengthen the Neck and Shoulders

*Crab Walk

*Wheelbarrow Races

*Donkey Kicks

feet lined up to
shoulders -
good enough
distance from
wall

~~**~~ Wall Push Ups

~~*~~ Chair Push Ups - grab sides of chair lift rear

~~**~~ Complete Assignments Taped To the Wall

*Encourage Climbing On the Playground

tape X on floor
where they need to
stand. Vertical
surface is the
key.

Improving Visual Perceptual Skills

done

*Memory Games: table-top games or play as a class

*"I Spy: the books and the game"

*Where's Waldo

*Find the Hidden Pictures

*Matching Games

*Build What I Build: with Legos, Tinker Toys, blocks and such

*Play Simon Says:

"Simon Says"- Do This (Model a Body Action or Pose)

"Simon Says"- Do This (Give Only a Verbal Cue)

Improving Visual Motor Skills

done

*Draw in the air with your fingers

*Dot to Dot

*Mazes

~~*~~ *Toss/Catch Games

*Stencils

*Tracing

*Pick up Stix

*Finish the half-drawn picture

Building Strong Fingers

*Play doh: pinch, poke, squeeze, roll, pull apart, find hidden beads

*Silly putty or therapy putty

*Squeeze water out of sponges or nerf balls

*Water plants or wash the board using a squirt bottle

*Chalk letters or shapes on playground, sidewalk, or side of brick building... then use the squirt bottles to spray it off with water... scrub it down with a brush!!!
→ on carpet squares

*Duplo blocks and Legos

*Tinker Toys

*Toobers and Zots —

*school store
foam w/
wires
inside*

*Super Toobs

*Velcro Games

*Magnet books and Games

*Crumble paper for an art project: rest your hand on the table and use only one hand!

*Use that hole punch! Play a counting game!

*Tear thicker paper, cardboard, and/or masking tape to make a picture with

*Wind up toys

*Play counting/pattern games with clothespins: large to small

*Color with crayons and paper over textured materials: corrugated cardboard, small bubble wrap, concrete, sand paper

*Color or draw using "wiggly writers" — *shake when writing
battery operated
(Big Lots)*

*Play pick up games to count and such with tongs and tweezers

***Little fingers' best friend: www.therapysshoppe.com

excellent sight to purchase items

*tongs
tweezers
clothes pins*

"Getting Down to the Nitty Gritty: Learning Letters Without Using Paper and Pencil"

-Put dark colored paper on the desk and cover it with powder: have students imitate your letter/shape OR show them one, hide it, then have them draw it

-Practice writing on the board with paintbrush and water

-Make a letter with yarn and glue it onto paper, use it as a tracing pattern to trace with your finger

-Make a letter on a carpet square using colored masking tape

-Draw a LARGE letter on the board or on paper taped to the wall... turn out the lights... trace it with a flashlight

-Practice drawing *in* clay or *with* clay

* -Trace a letter on your friend's back... have them guess the letter

* -Play "simon says," point your index fingers together in the air, make a letter

* -Make letters with wikki stix

* -Make letters with pipe cleaners

-Make letters with super toobs - accordion tubes

-Work with the "Handwriting Without Tears" letter making pieces

-Try the "wet, dry, try" technique from the "Handwriting Without Tears" program

Are You Ready For Pencil and Paper?

Getting a better grip!!!

*the pick up pencil trick

*different pencil grippers available

-the "stetro" grip

-the "pencil grip"

-let's make a "handwriter" - 2 ponytail holders

*the Ticonderoga pencil

*golf pencils - smallness facilitates grip pencil in the other loop.

*try broken crayons

*put the markers away!!!

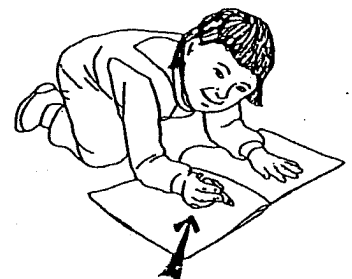
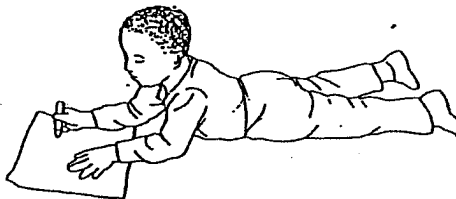
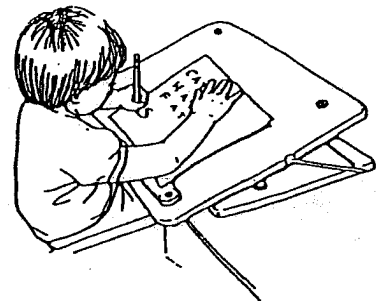
- too smooth across pg.
don't give feedback to
hand & brain.

Trying Different Paper

*Highlight every other line

*Use tactile cues: raised line paper, wikki stix lines

Paying Attention to Positions...



The Two Minute Warm-Up

Chair Push-Ups
(do 5 in a row counting slowly)

Balloon Squeeze
(writing hand!! 10 in a row)

Thumb wiggles, Pointer wiggles
(10 in a row)

Taking your pencil for a walk
(walk fingers up, down, then twirl it around)

Do the pencil pick up trick!!!

Now you are ready to write!

: Most important - starting point (at top - to bottom)
writing - b/c proper handwriting is taught

write on 3 ring binder as easel
card board placemat to work on

top to bottom; left to right; not learning it's a
combination of straight + curved lines; instead 52 separate
pictures.

www.hntears.com get wood pieces ^{chalk} _{board}
Purchase Handwriting Without Tears - manipulatives
wood pieces; wet dry try, then handwriting page.
www.thehandwritingclinic.com

